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## WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

# News

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## EDITORIAL NOTE FOURTH ESTATE



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Every year on May 3, many countries celebrate World Press Freedom Day. This day was declared relatively recently, in 1993, which in itself is rather peculiar, given that the world's first printed newspaper first appeared in China back in the 8th century. It took Europe another six centuries to establish the printing industry, and nine centuries in Russia and the United States.

Coincidentally, the first American newspaper, founded in Boston on September 25, 1690 by the English journalist and publisher Benjamin Harris, was immediately closed. The colonial authorities did not like that it addressed the problems of the in-

digenous inhabitants of the continent. There was not even a trace of any freedom of the press in those days. But does it exist today?

We have to admit that today the basic principles of journalism – accuracy and objectivity – are increasingly violated. The information space is filled with tendentious and biased materials, where all kinds of fake news mislead people, and it is difficult to distinguish a truth from a lie.

It is not for nothing that journalism is called the Fourth Estate: the role of mass media in national politics is enormous. And that means a huge responsibility to people and the world.

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# THE RIGHT TO KNOW

*World Press Freedom Day is observed every year to remind that press freedom and freedom of speech are enshrined under the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

By EKATERINA GRIGORIEVA

Every year, May 3 is a date which celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom, to evaluate press freedom around the world, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

The journalists' and reporters' work is difficult and dangerous, because media representatives often obtain information in various hot spots, risking their health and sometimes their lives. But not only natural disasters and martial law threaten fearless journalists. World history shows many examples of how people devoted to their profession were subjected to horrific repression and persecution by the authorities just for telling the truth that was uncomfortable for politicians, before the world. That is why today freedom of speech and press freedom are so highly valued and celebrated internationally.

World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 following a Recommendation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991. At the core of UNESCO's mandate is freedom of the press and freedom of expression. UNESCO believes that these freedoms allow for mutual understanding to build a sustainable peace.

The date of the celebration was not chosen by chance. It was on May 3, 1991 in the capital of Namibia that the *Windhoek Declaration* was signed, calling on governments around the world to ensure press freedom and

the democratic character of media.

UNESCO organises World Press Freedom Day themed events in different parts of the world. Traditionally, in 2022, the award ceremony of the prestigious UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize marking a contribution to press freedom, is taking place again.

World Press Freedom Day is observed every year to remind the



Photo: Markus Spiske

world community that press freedom and freedom of speech are the principal rights enshrined under the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

World Press Freedom Day provides the global community with the opportunity to pay tribute to those news professionals who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

On 2–5 May 2022, UNESCO and the Republic of Uruguay will host the annual World Press Freedom Day Global Conference in a hybrid format in Punta Del Este, Uruguay. Under the theme "*Journalism under Digital Siege*", the digital era's impact on freedom of expression, the safety of journalists, access to information and privacy will be discussed.

World Press Freedom Day 2022 will reunite relevant stakeholders such as policymakers, journalists, media representatives, activists, cybersecurity managers and legal experts to explore these issues and develop concrete solutions to address the threats posed by increased surveillance to press freedom and privacy.

Note that according to 2021 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, Scandinavian countries take the top four places: Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark. Germany takes the 13th place, Great Britain, France and the USA take the 33rd, 34th and 44th places respectively, and Russia is in the 150th place...

# FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

*France held a presidential election on 10 and 24 April 2022*

By MIKHAIL POLYAKOV

France's 12th presidential election was held on 10 and 24 April 2022. As no candidate won a majority in the first round, a run-off was held, in which Emmanuel Macron defeated Marine Le Pen and was re-elected as President of France.

Macron, from La République En Marche! (LREM), had defeated Le Pen, leader of the National Rally, once already in the 2017 presidential election. His first term lasts until 13 May 2022, and he announced on 3 March 2022 that he would run for re-election. He is the first President of France to have won a re-election bid since Jacques Chirac in 2002.

In the first round, Macron took the lead with 27.9% of votes, followed by Le Pen with 23.2%, Jean-Luc Mélenchon of La France Insoumise with 22%, and Éric Zemmour of Reconquête with 7.1%. Valérie Pécresse of The Republicans took 4.8% of the vote, and Anne Hidalgo, mayor of Paris and Socialist Party candidate, 1.8%. Both obtained the worst result in the history of their party.



In the second round, Macron beat Le Pen with 58.5% of the vote to her 41.5%, a narrower margin than in the 2017 election. Turnout was 71.9%, the lowest in a presidential election run-off since 1969. On 20 April, the only election debate of the campaign (moderated by Léa Salamé and Gilles Bouleau) to feature both major candidates was held. Polls conducted after the debate to ascertain which candidate performed best,

showed that 59% of viewers thought that Macron had performed better, compared to 39% for Le Pen. Le Pen conceded defeat after exit projections became available.

The presidential election is to be followed by the legislative election that will be held on 12 June, with potential runoffs on 19 June, to elect the 577 members of the National Assembly, the lower house of the French Parliament.



# ABOUT FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND MEDIA

*The restrictions imposed on dissemination of information and freedom of speech are a violation of the UN Charter, the Rules of the Commission on Human Rights*

By VLADISLAV PEREVALOV,  
journalist

Seven centuries long Europeans expressed criticism of Russia, which was mainly based on the subjective judgments of those Western monarchs for whom Russia was incomprehensible and very independent; The West did not want to accept that Russia was constantly striving for independence from Western Europe, and even did not want to abandon Orthodoxy. And in the last hundred years, Western states, including, by the way, the Third Reich and its vassals, have repeatedly raised the issue of the absence of certain guarantees of freedom and democracy, including freedom of speech, in Russia.

Western politicians, philosophers and journalists have repeatedly criticised Russia for being unable to provide legal guarantees for this freedom of speech. And this was despite the fact that between 1938 and 1945 the fascisation of Europe completely ruled out any manifestations of democratic freedoms!

Since the early 2000s, the West has been arguing that freedom of speech is basically impossible in Russia, that Russia is an authoritarian state, as the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union have always been. And this is despite the existence of various parties and diverse mass media in Russia.

But in the West, the situation now is just the opposite: the events of the last decade have shown that the vast majority of Western media always sing in unison demonstrating rare

unanimity, when covering a political event taking place either inside NATO countries or outside this organisation. But more importantly, such unanimity is manifested only when the Western media reflect the official position of the United States or NATO as a whole on any issue of international life.

As for a point of view that differs from what today we call the mainstream, that is, a pro-government position that is literally being imposed on Western society, then such a point of view is hushed up in every possible way, sharply criticised as anti-patriotic and anti-state, and the media which permitted itself such liberty, immediately suffer ostracism. The flow of information from foreign media that is at odds with the local mainstream position is subject to all sorts of barriers which are illegal as a rule, – either due to local laws or subject to international law.

Recall that in the modern world, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are considered one of the most important foundations of a democratic state. Maintaining the pluralism of public opinion, developing a dialogue within society and creating the necessary conditions for the functioning of the political system is possible only with effective guarantees for the exercise of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. But look at the USA. A country that calls itself the pillar of democracy, its

conductor and guarantor, has been violating this democratic principle of freedom of the press for many years. Two categories of mass media have formed here: one, being supported and fed by the elite, obediently repeats and develops everything that is consistent with the goals of state policy and, accordingly, is the mainstream; and another, being squeezed to the periphery of media activity and constantly attacked by the mainstream, is slowly but steadily losing financial support and eventually surrendering to the mercy of the winner.

As you know, the restrictions imposed on dissemination of information and freedom of speech in general are a violation of the UN Charter, the Rules of the Commission on Human Rights, and the laws of most countries that call themselves democratic. But in recent years, these democracies, with the ease of totalitarian regimes, have restricted information coming from both the domestic and international media only because this information contains ideas that do not coincide with the official position tacitly approved by the authorities.

It is impossible not to recognise the correctness of the public in a number of countries, which draws attention, for example, to the policy of Facebook, the world's largest social network. This network has long been blatantly censoring Russian content under various clearly far-fetched pretexts.



Another egregious example of the attitude of the authorities of “democratic countries” towards Russian news agencies is their fight against RT and Sputnik. Back in 2016, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties, which included the Sputnik agency and the RT TV channel into the main sources of information threats to the European Union – and in the absence of any reasonable grounds! In 2017, the CIA and the International Development Committee of the UK House of Commons published reports in which RT and Sputnik were considered as unscrupulous media, disseminating biased and unreliable materials.

From what has been said, it follows that the authorities of Western countries, with the help of their media, regulators and even law enforcement agencies, have long declared war on

objective information that Russian agencies, television and radio channels addressed to the international community.

Since the beginning of the shelling in the Donbass, the world has been living under the conditions of Western hysteria about Russia’s informational influence on political processes in other states and the alleged destructive role of the Russian media on European peace and stability.

In 2019, the Vilnius District Administrative Court approved the decision of the Lithuanian Commission on Television and Radio Broadcasting to block access to the Sputnik Lithuania website, justified by the need to stop unauthorised publication of copyrighted content on that resource. That same year, RT was dropped from two US broadcast networks covering densely populated US areas such as New York, New Jersey, San Diego, Los Angeles, and Chicago. The

adoption of such a decision was due to the inexpediency of providing services on distribution of a television signal in the context of wide availability of the Internet. Not only in Russia, but also in a number of other countries, this action was regarded as an undisguised manifestation of censorship.

All these actions of the state bodies of Western countries have demonstrated to the world community that “democracies” are trying to isolate their citizens from any point of view that does not coincide with the official one, do not give them the opportunity to learn alternative positions regarding burning problems both on the international stage and within any Western country. It is not surprising that Russian journalists working in these countries, experience serious difficulties when they try to collect local opinions on this or that issue: as a rule, these citizens are completely separated from global information





US Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets EU High Representative Josep Borrell

that is important both for their country and the whole world.

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has caused new hysteria in the Western media. The result was a situation bordering on complete absurdity. Subsidiaries hastily established by Western media, thousands of stringers and bloggers paid not only by Western news agencies, but also by the NATO apparatus and the military departments of the Atlantic Alliance member countries, have created an opaque smoke screen that cut off both Ukraine and Western Europe as a whole from objective real-time information. Fox News TV presenter Tucker Carlson from the US, however, took it upon himself to say that the largest corporations operating in the information field are now closely cooperating with the intelligence agencies and control all information

coming from Ukraine. And anyone who tries to express their opinion which differs from what they need, is censored around the world.

First of all, such censorship is applied to television programs and performances that are most popular both in Russia and abroad. Many viewers who tried to watch the program *Evening with Vladimir Solovyov* on the YouTube channel heard the following phrase: "Unfortunately, YouTube has removed this program at the request of the copyright holder." The speeches of Yuriy Podolyaka, the military and political expert from Sevastopol, who was listened to with interest by tens of thousands of viewers not only in Russia and Ukraine, but also in Western European countries, were deleted from YouTube. The flow of information that contributed to the understanding of the situation in and

around Ukraine has narrowed down to a stream of lies and fabrications. Observers reasonably note that a one-sided assessment of what is happening will inevitably lead to serious mistakes in making political and military decisions, many of which, by the way, have already been made.

The scale of opposition to objective information has significantly outgrown even those that took place during the Cold War. As a result of this, there is every reason to say that a massive information war has been launched against Russia, which includes not only the distortion of facts and numerous provocative stuffing, but also the distortion of historical facts and the demonisation of the Russian people. The Western media gave rise to slightly veiled Nazi slogans that Russia has no right to life, that the Russian people are not like

others, because they are the bearer of evil, barbarism, and violence. Let us note that such speeches are heard from the mouths of politicians in respectable Europe, including, which is the worst of all, German politicians.

Creating the image of a Russian person as a carrier of an inhumane ideology being far from the ideal of a Western layman and generating aggression already by virtue of their genetic code, is the current task of the aggressive Western media generously paid by the US military concerns and the Western intelligence agencies. But they don't stop there. A cyber attack has begun on every person living in Russia, and on every Russian living abroad. For example, public networks reported that Russian citizens and Russian residents of European countries who are trying to watch the programs of Russian socio-political channels or individual political and military experts no longer face only content blocking, but the threat of dangerous viruses sent to them from the territory of Ukraine and the Western European countries. This aggressive struggle against freedom of speech and freedom of television and radio information, as we see, has acquired the character of mass individual terror.

Two directions can be distinguished within the framework of the information war launched by the West against Russia. One of them is directly related to the events in Ukraine. It includes any one-sided, extremely unreliable information about the actions of the Russian troops, the demonisation of Russian soldiers, fakes of the widest range. In this direction, the European countries and the countries outside Europe drawn into the orbit of the United States, are taking concerted action together with the Ukrainian media.

But there is another area in which the United States and other NATO member countries are particularly active today, making incredible efforts in agitation and propaganda work. We are talking about coopera-

tion between Russia and China and the problem of biological laboratories in Ukraine.

Actually, attempts to worsen relations between Russia and China have always been the task of NATO, but only recently the Western media have decided to resort to large-scale fakes for that purpose. One example is a photograph of an allegedly unexploded Kinzhal, or "dagger", missile, which Russia used to attack Kramatorsk, as published by CNN, the American television corporation. But the picture shows a Tochka-U missile which is in service with the Armed Forces of Ukraine! The Russian Kinzhals have dual fins near the end, while the Ukrainian missile has single fins near the middle. However, no one at CNN analysed or compared anything. When international experts confirmed after all that it was Tochka-U and not Kinzhal, a new fake appeared that it was a missile in service with the troops of the Russian Federation. In Rus-

sia, these old missiles were disposed of long ago, but the Western media continued to promote their idea. And only when the Italian journalists made a close-up photograph of the number on the missile and compared it with the numbers of other similar missiles used by the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the hostilities in Ukraine, all the Western media suddenly lost their interest in Kramatorsk.

The second topic that today attracts the attention of the US administration, the US intelligence community, and the media obedient to the authorities, includes 30 biolaboratories in Ukraine engaged in preparations for biological warfare, but not in sanitary and epidemiological problems, as they say in the US. NATO is doing everything possible to prevent a wide discussion of this topic in the media, but sooner or later it will inevitably catch the main focus of the world press and become the most discussed subject among the world community.



Photo: Nijwam Swargiary



# SAINTS OF THE EASTER TIME

*The period from Easter to Pentecost is dedicated to the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ*

By AUGUSTINE SOKOLOVSKI,  
*Doctor of Theology, priest*

The Feast of all Feasts and the Solemnity of all Solemnities, as the liturgical hymns call Holy Pascha, lasts exactly fifty days. However, at the same time, the Church daily celebrates the memory of the saints. This theological reflection issue is dedicated to three saints of the Ancient Church, whose memory is celebrated in May.

All three were bishops, which in the mentality of the Ancient Church meant constant concern for the poor, sick and persecuted, serving God and people. The first of them, Theodore of Sykeon, was an ascetic and miracle worker, the second, Athanasius of Alexandria, a thinker and theologian, the third, beloved and well-known Saint Nicholas a good shepherd, friend, and brother of his people. All of them were united by a common faith in the Risen Lord. They were the saints of the Passover Time.

## *Theodore of Sykeon*

On May 5 the Church celebrates the memory of Theodore of Sykeon (530–613). The saint was a great ascetic, abbot of the monastery, a bishop who left his throne for the sake of ascetism, a miracle worker and seer, similar to the biblical prophets.

Theodore's whole life was related to the veneration of the Saint George, whom the Orthodox tradition calls the Great Martyr. Thanks to his own genuine personal right-

eousness, Theodore contributed to the spread of the veneration of Saint George at that time.

One of the greatest saints of his time, Theodore seems to be forgotten nowadays. Unfortunately, he is a forgotten saint. If the saints can be compared and likened to each other, then, perhaps, Theodore Sykeon was for the north of Asia Minor the same who, two centuries before him, was for the south of Anatolia St. Nicholas.

The vita of Theodore is extremely interesting and rich in details. It was written down by his disciple Eleusis, nicknamed George. It is an interesting coincidence of names in honor of Saint George!

So, Theodore was born around 530 in the village of Sykeon in Galatia, a historical region in the central region of Asia Minor. It was the time of Emperor Justinian the Great (527–565), who for the last time united the Empire, East and West, Constantinople and Rome, Spain and Roman Africa into a single Empire.

According to his vita, Theodore's father was a certain Cosmas, an imperial official who set off from the capital to become the ruler of one of the provinces. On the way he stopped in Sykeon in one of the hotels... Theodore's mother was a prostitute.

From his very birth, Theodore was given the special intercession and help of Saint George. From a very young age, Theodore showed a particular propensity for ascetic exercises, completely neglecting the rules

of moderation. Already at the age of 14, the age of majority according to the laws of that time, Theodore dug a cave for himself under the church of Saint George in order to practice asceticism alone. The extreme severity of self-restraint in the asceticism led to the fact that Theodore had to be saved from wounds and ulcers. Barely alive, he was rescued from the cave and brought to the house of the bishop of the city of Anastasiopolis. The bishop was so struck by the spiritual age of the young man that, contrary to the canons, he ordained him a priest, successively raising him to all the previous degrees of clergy in just five days. The bishop also took care of his treatment.

After his recovery, Theodore went on a pilgrimage to Palestine, in order to get acquainted with the life of the hermits there. There, in the Monastery of Saint George of Choziba near Jericho, became a monk. Soon he returned to his homeland, where he founded a monastery near the very church of St. George, where he had spent his youth. There Theodore gathered his disciples around him.

Despite the remoteness of this area from the largest political centers of that time, authorities approached him for advice. Among them was the future emperor Mauritius, who was then at the head of the imperial army. After the victory over the Persians, the commander visited the hermit, who predicted his ascension to the imperial throne, which happened soon in 582.

After the death of the local Bishop Timothy, Theodore, against his will, by solemn acclamation of clergy and people, was elected bishop.

The main duty of the bishop in those days was the deeds of mercy, a fair trial and helping people. At first, Theodore zealously devoted himself to episcopal work, but soon, contrary to the canons, he left the see and fled to Palestine. There he turned to one of the great hermits with a question about his future. The ascetic pointed out to him that Theodore's disgust for the episcopal ministry meant that by the will of God he had to resign.

Theodore returned to Ancyra and asked the metropolitan to appoint a successor to him. The metropolitan refused. Then Theodore went to Constantinople, where, with the same request for permission to leave the see, he turned to the Patriarch and even to the Emperor. They ordered the Metropolitan of Ancyra to release the saint from the administration of the diocese. Rejoicing at the fulfillment of his dream of hermitage, Theodore closed himself in his monastery, so as not to leave it again. But one day he still had to go to Constantinople to heal one of the Emperor's sons from leprosy.

At the end of his life, the saint became very known for many miracles and prophecies. The life of Theodore of Sykeon passed under the protection of Saint George. The whole life of Theodore passed near the shrine dedicated to George: there he was baptized, grew up, became an ascetic, founded a monastery, was elected a bishop, and again returned to monastic life.

The memory of Saint George, 6 May, is always celebrated during the

Easter period. By the will of God, the same applies to Theodore. Because according to the vita, Theodore departed to the Lord on the eve of the memory of the Saint George in 613, on May 5.

## *Athanasius of Alexandria*

On May 15 the Church celebrates the memory of St. Athanasius of Alexandria. The saint was the bishop of Alexandria. Founded by the Apostle Mark, the Church of the biggest City of the Empire gave birth to many holy bishops: Dionysius, Peter, Alexander, Timothy, Theophilus, Proterius, Apollinarius, Eulogius, Theodore, John V the Merciful, and many, many



*Theodore of Sykeon*

others. "The great host and the great cloud of witnesses", – as the Epistle to the Hebrews says (cf. Heb. 12:1). Saint Athanasius was the greatest among them. He entered the memory of the Church under the name of Athanasius the Great.

Throughout his life, Athanasius defended the dogma of consubstantiality of Jesus Christ with God the Father. He confessed and taught that the Logos, the Son of God, God, who became man in Christ Jesus, is eternal and uncreated. This confession saved Christianity, preserved its biblical origins.

Athanasius was repeatedly in exile, for a total of about 20 years. He lived a very long life at that time, and passed away to the Lord in 373, having lived a little over 75 years. Athanasius was a mild-mannered man, ardent for the truth, and at the same time meek and firm. A friend of the monastics, it was he who compiled the life of Anthony the Great.

Among the great multitude of saints glorified by the Church, only a very few have received the title of "Great Ones". These are the bishops: Athanasius, Basil, Leo of Rome, Pope Gregory I; and the Desert Fathers: Anthony, Pachomius, Arsenius, Macarius. Such a name, undoubtedly, denotes a special significance in the formation of the Orthodox Christian tradition, the foundations of spiritual life and asceticism. Athanasius is called great for his role in defending the dogma of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and the decrees of the Council of Nicaea.

Commemoration of St. Athanasius (+373) is an ecumenical tribute to the memory of

the Alexandrian Church. Egypt and Alexandria made a precious, invaluable contribution to the origin, development and spread of Christianity. A mature, intellectually, and spiritually strong and persuasive Christianity.



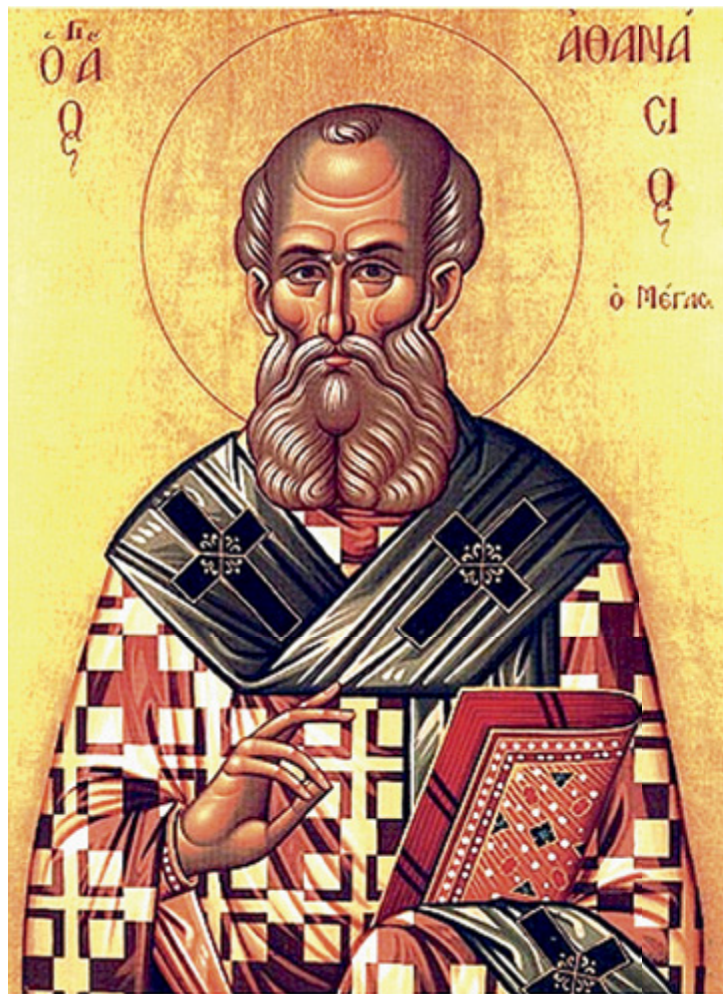
Athanasius personifies that holy and great time when the Universe longed that soon Christianity would be preached everywhere and the whole world would believe. "You have not yet fought to the point of bloodshed, striving against sin" (Heb. 12:4), – the memory of the holy Archbishop of Alexandria is a commandment to proclaim the gospel throughout the earth. Under Patriarch Germanus I (715–730), the relics of Athanasius were transferred to Constantinople.

### Nicolas of Myra

The veneration of Saint Nicholas is extremely great. Undoubtedly, he is one of the most revered saints in history. Moreover, this veneration extends not only to the entire Orthodox world, but to the entire Christian planet. As a spontaneous reaction to such great fame of one of the saints, the question arises why some saints are revered more than others. The answer to it is revealed in the biblical teaching, according to which, an immortal man, created in the image of God, who has attained the likeness of God in holiness, lives and continues to live forever. A human being remains a living, thinking, loving person.

Therefore, many saints chose to praise God day and night. They preferred to get away from the veneration of people, and after the death of the body to maintain that humility that revived their souls in their bodily life on earth. As it says in the book of the Apocalypse: "These are those who came from the great

tribulation; they washed their clothes and made their clothes white with the blood of the Lamb. For this they are now before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He who sits on the throne will dwell in them" (Rev. 7:14–15).



Athanasius of Alexandria

These saints, who loved most of all the glorification of God, laid their hands on Saint Nicholas and entrusted him with intercession for the people. They preferred to remain in the unknown. They are great saints, and, above all, saints, holy bishops, contemporaries of Saint Nicholas himself.

It is known from the history of the Ancient Church that only a few decades after the death of St. Nicholas, within the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which then numbered, ac-

cording to various estimates, about fifty million people, there were two thousand orthodox bishops. Asking the question why Nicholas, was chosen for such a great service to people after his death, by his brothers in holiness and God, it is important to turn to the text of his vita to make sure that almost nothing has come down to us from his biography. Unfortunately, specific detailed historical documents about the earthly biography of Nicholas have not come down to us. His glory of holiness is, first, a heavenly glory of signs and wonders, born of reverence, born in the veneration of the church people. Contemporaries of Nicholas, the great bishops of the East and West of the Christian world – Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo and Leo the Great – did not say anything about Nicholas in their works.

According to his life, the saint was born in the year 270. That is, he was a contemporary of the era of persecution and the legalization of Christianity under Emperor Constantine (+337). He was present during the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea of 325. He was contemporary of the era of great dogmatic disputes after the Council. But for his contemporaries Nicholas remained in obscurity. This mysterious disappearance of him from the immediate memory of history was rewarded by God with the great glorification and glory that he received from Heaven.

Belief in the Second Coming of Christ is a dogma. Every day it is

proclaimed in the Creed with the words: "I believe in the One Lord Jesus Christ. Coming again with glory, to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom will have no end."

The expectation of the Lord's Coming places us, the Church, as a community of believers, in the period between two Easters: our earthly Easter, celebrated from since the Resurrection of Jesus to Pentecost every year, and that Great Easter of the Lord Jesus, when He returns in glory with all the saints. The Lord will resurrect every person who has ever lived from the beginning of the world. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:53–54).

For a correct, Orthodox, understanding of holiness, it is especially important to realize that the saints are not only intercessors helping us, as if remaining with the Church after the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord Jesus – the One and Only True Wonderworker and Saint for all time – but they are forerunners of His Second Glorious Coming. As the Gospel of Matthew mysteriously speaks of this: "And the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were resurrected, and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they entered the Holy City and appeared to many" (Matthew 27:51–53). Such a resurrected, emerging from the graves forerunner of the Coming of Christ was for the Church and the Whole World St. Nicholas, whom the faithful request for intercession before God.

### Christ is risen!

The spring celebration in honor of St. Nicholas on May 22 falls on the Easter period. These days, believers greet each other with the words "Christ is Risen!". To con-

clude our text on the Paschal saints, let us say a few words about this Easter greeting, which, no doubt, each of them proclaimed.

"Christ is Risen" is not just a message that Jesus is alive, but one of the original Creeds. This early Christian exclamation confesses the belief that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the God-Anointed Savior of the World, in whom, and only in Him, deliverance is given. "God raised him from the dead, and he is a stone that has become the head of the corner, and there is salvation in no one else" (Acts 4:10–12).

"Christ is Risen" means that the Lord Jesus has risen from the dead, and death no longer has power over Him. Death no longer possesses Him, as Scripture says. "Christ, having



Nicolas of Myra

risen from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over Him" (Acts 6:9). Anyone who joins this witness of the life and death of Christ is withdrawn from the power of death by the power of Christ and God.

"Christ is Risen" – the confession of the Lordship of Christ and His Victory over death in the Orthodox tradition replaces any greeting on Easter days, and even many prayers. It is repeated again and again because the property of the Christian faith is such that only transmitted, that is, communicated to others, believers and unbelievers, this faith comes to life in the heart of the confessing person himself and becomes his real property.

After all, faith is not a property or an acquisition, but a gift from God. The faith is an unaccountable, sovereign, without beginning, that is, if translated from the original Greek literally, an anarchic Gift of God and the Father in Christ Jesus. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude of people, whom no one could number, from all nations and tribes and peoples and languages, stood before the throne and before the Lamb in white robes and with palm branches in their hands", – is written in the Apocalypse (Apoc.7,9).

Imagine all the people, imagine this great multitude of saints, who serve God and help people day and night until the time is fulfilled. "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me. And the Spirit and the bride say: Come! And let him who hears say: Come! Amen. Him, come, Jesus Christ" (Apoc. 22:12,17–20).

The Church, as the Society of Believers and the Bride of Christ, together with St. Theodore, Athanasius, Nicholas, and all the saints, here and now, is waiting for the Lord Jesus. This expectation should come true.



# MESSAGES FROM THE BRAVE AND ELUSIVE BANKSY

*He painted easily readable images dedicated to acute social and political subjects*

By OKSANA KOPENKINA,  
art analyst, founder of the Arts Diary & Pad website

It is curious that Banksy brought art back to where it once began. On the walls! Once it was the cave walls. Now – the buildings walls. And no “third parties” such as museums between the viewer and the painting.

Banksy gives his own comments on his incognito position: “If you want to be heard, you better wear a mask when speaking”.

His words contradict the familiar world view. Indeed, in this era of smartphones and social networks, almost everyone showcases their lives.

And being Mr. X in this kind of world turns out to be the best way to attract attention. And people really “hear” him.

## *A Girl with a Balloon. 2002*

*A Girl with a Balloon* is the most popular work by Banksy. For the first time, this graffiti appeared in South Bank area in London in 2002.

Probably, this is the only artist's work, whose meaning is not known for sure. A heart-shaped balloon is carried away from a girl by a gust of wind. She is upset, but too calm in NO childish manner. In short, she took her loss philosophically. A common child would be crying and stamping her feet with annoyance.

The artist himself gave lengthy comments on this work: “When this happens, just leave quietly”. Which



*Self-destruction of Banksy painting at Sotheby's auction in 2018*

means that he tells us to withstand our losses steadfastly, without strains and hysteria. Probably, in 2002 he went through his own loss, and this painting expresses some personal experience.

And since we know nothing about the artist, we cannot “read” it to the end.

In this case, everyone chooses what to see in it: hope for the better, discontent with our children growing up too fast or importance of being courageous when facing any difficulties.

This image has become especially popular after an incredible incident.

As early as in 2006, Banksy created the author's paper copy of the “Girl” using acrylic paints. He inserted it into a gilded frame. Such frames are used for Rembrandt. And sold.

And in 2018, this work was put up for bidding. And when the hammer hit for the third time with the words heard: “And 1 million 400 thousand – three! Sold!” – the painting... self-destroyed! Well, almost... It turned out that 12 years ago, Banksy was the one to build it into the frame. He expected that one day his painting will be sold

## *Sweeping this Under the Carpet. 2006*

A girl in dressed as a maid is sweeping rubbish under the wall. For the first time, one of the Banksy's most popular works appeared on the wall of a Gallery in West London in the same 2006.

The artist plays with a metaphor: instead of solving too inconvenient problems, the government just hides them “under the carpet”, since they will affect the reputation of those in power as soon as they become public.



at an auction and all he pull have to do is to press a button.

I see all this from the following point of view. In our world, the value of material benefits substantially decreases. We throw things away easily and change clothes every season. Now, the time for works of art has come.

It is difficult to say which exactly problems Banksy had in mind. I can only guess that as early as in 2006, signs of a coming global financial crisis appeared. But no one spoke clearly about a forthcoming collapse.

## *Zebra Stripes Washing. 2008*

A woman is hanging for drying just washed stripes of a ... zebra!

It is curious, of course. What is surprising is that this work of Banksy is



little known. Probably, because of its location. It appeared in 2008 in a settlement in Mali (West Africa).

There are only few photos of this work. Most likely, it has been destroyed long ago. Just because the residents of this half-abandoned settlement have hardly heard anything about Banksy.

So, what is the artist's message? It's immediately becoming clear that people of Mali are facing great problems with water. Meanwhile, the woman in the picture is wasting it. She spends it on the flat nonsense – is washing zebra stripes.

Thus, the artist hints at how easy it is for people from Europe and North America to get water. And how badly people on the African continent need it.

We are used to living in a world of abundance. And some people lack everything in this world, even common water.

## *Mobile Lovers. 2014*

Banksy left this graffiti the door of Broad Plains Boys club in Bristol. This



work is interesting not only because of its meaning, but by its history as well. At the time when Banksy painted these graffiti, the youth club was on the edge of being closed. Its owner took off the door from the hinges and brought it into the club. He wanted to charge a small fee showing the work to let the club exist.



The city authorities confiscated the door and placed it to a museum. The club owner turned out to be a brave man and sued the city mayor!

All this fuss went on until Banksy intervened. In a letter to the club owner, he wrote that he wanted to help his centre. Therefore, he insisted that the work should belong to him, but not to the city.

The club owner sold the door with the painting by Banksy for 400 thousand pounds. The youth centre was saved. As good as modern Robin Hood!

### ***A Kitten in the Gaza Strip. 2015***

In 2015 in the Gaza Strip, an image of a cute kitten with a pink bow appeared on a destroyed wall. The contrast turned out to be incredible. A kitten on the back of ruins.

The life of Gaza people couldn't be worse. For 8 hours a day they have electricity turned off. 90% of water from wells is not suitable for drinking. Thousands of people died under shellfire.

A piece of this long-suffering land is surrounded by a fence: almost no one is let out. Attempts made by international sponsors to link this land with the surrounding world have failed. Construction of a port and an airport that has just begun was stopped by shellfire. Only trucks carrying humanitarian aid, such as food and soap, are

allowed inside this sector. Everything else is prohibited. Even building materials! And it's simply impossible to



rebuild the destroyed buildings.

Those who were unlucky to be born here fell into this trap. More than half of the population are children. Here, birth rate is extremely high as in any poor country. This is a prison, a huge children's prison.

And amidst this prison, the Banksy's *Kitten* suddenly appears.

The artist again criticizes us with no regret. People are obsessed with watching cats. So, you are free to admire a cat in the middle of this hell. But there is a hope that one day you will look around.

### ***Brexit. 2017***

In 2017, a huge mural with the European Union flag appeared in Dover. The worker is knocking down one of 12 stars so that cracks are spreading all over the flag.

A year before, 51.9% of UK citizens voted for their country to exit from the EU. Obviously, Banksy decided to be among those 48.1% who were against the exit.

And again, the artist has found an extremely successful place for his work. His huge mural is located near a port in the English Channel. Dover city by the English Channel is located next to France. When the weather is fine, one can even see the neighbour's coastline. The countries are close but decided to live far away from each other.



Obviously, Banksy used a rope to go down from the roof. Perhaps, he was not alone. Of course, he used stencil plates like in other works. But you must admit, still it was risky.

Just like Impressionists, he had only 15–30 minutes to create. However, the former had a goal of catching the special light. Banksy has a time limit, since he is in danger of being caught. Well, he managed it this time as well.

In 2019, the graffiti, which was estimated at £1 million, was painted over.

### ***Merry Christmas. 2018***

At the end of 2018, a painting showing a boy appeared on a wall of a common garage in a small town of Port Talbot (Wales). A happy child is catching snowflakes with his mouth.

But when you look around the corner, you see ... the next part of the work. And you immediately understand that it's not snow that is

flying on the child, but ash from a burning trash bin!

This time, Banksy decided to speak about ecology. And, as usual he has chosen a perfect place to do this, which ideally suits the message.

In the Port Talbot, there is a steel plant that covers it with grey ashes from time to time. It's easy to see smoking pipes not far from this garage.

It is of interest that the garage owner sold this work to a collector for 100 thousand pounds. But under the condition that the work will remain in the city.

Perhaps, it will be able to change the life of the town for the better. And this "snow" in the town will eventually stop.



metaphor is true for many people's lives. Well, in some countries, a comparison with a squirrel in a wheel is more common. But in general, it's about marking time. When living according to "home – work – home" scheme does not allow us to take a step aside, to say nothing of moving forward. And there are a lot of office workers living on the rat race principle in Manhattan.

### ***Rat in a Clock. 2018***

In 2018, Banksy painted a running rat inside the clock on a Manhattan building (New York). This is the symbol of the rat race! After all, this

Now, the clock was removed by the building owners. They want to sell it. City authorities are against. City residents are also for the watch being returned. Who knows, maybe Banksy will intervene here as well.





# FIRST MAJOR V&A EXHIBITION TO CELEBRATE MASCULINE STYLE

By OLGA VORONOVA

**F**ashioning Masculinities: The Art of Menswear is the first major V&A exhibition to celebrate the power, artistry and diversity of masculine attire and appearance. The exhibition runs at V&A Museum's Sainsbury Gallery until 6 November 2022.

The show traces how menswear has been fashioned and refashioned over the centuries, and how designers, tailors and artists – and their clients and sitters – have constructed and performed masculinity and unpicked it at the seams.

The V&A museum showcases three iconic gowns – worn by Billy Porter, Harry Styles and Bimini Bon Boulash – alongside a specially commissioned, monumental film by Quentin Jones with Cadence Films.

The three gowns and the icons who wore them sparked viral moments, bringing visibility to a reimagined future for gendered dress. Billy Porter's tuxedo gown by Christian Siriano created a sensation on the Oscars red carpet in 2019. In 2020, an Alessandro Michele for Gucci custom gown and tailored jacket was worn by Harry Styles as the first solo male cover star of US Vogue. In 2021, Bimini Bon Boulash wore a wedding dress by Ella Lynch for the season 2 finale of Ru Paul's Drag Race UK. All three ensembles are on display in a UK museum for the first time.

Joining the gowns is a dynamic and celebratory film directed, animated,



*Giovanni Battista Moroni, The Tailor (Il Tagliapanni), 1565–70.*

*Photo (c) The National Gallery, London*

and illustrated by Quentin Jones. Produced by Cadence Films, it is a culmination of the themes explored in the exhibition – featuring dancing figures projected across a 5-metre-high by 12-metre-wide curved wall. Also announced today – and on display for the first time ever – is the sequinned Haider Ackermann suit worn by Timothée Chalamet to the Dune premiere at the Venice Film Festival. The exhibition Fashioning Masculinities: The Art of Menswear presents around 100 looks and 100 artworks, displayed thematically across three galleries and the finale.

Contemporary looks by legendary designers and rising stars are displayed alongside historical treasures from the V&A's collections and landmark loans: classical sculptures, Renaissance paintings, iconic photographs, and powerful film and performance. From looks by Gucci, Harris Reed, Grace Wales Bonner and Raf Simons, to paintings by Sofonisba Anguissola, Kehinde Wiley and Joshua Reynolds, contemporary artworks by Robert Longo, Omar Victor Diop and Yinka Shonibare CBE, to an extract from an all-male dance performance by Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, the exhibition showcases the variety of possible masculinities across the centuries from the Renaissance to the global contemporary.

Outfits worn by familiar faces are interspersed throughout, from Timothée Chalamet and Sam Smith, to David Bowie and Marlene Dietrich. Innovative creations and diverse representations highlight and celebrate the multiplicities of masculine sartorial self-expression, dressing beyond the binary.

Claire Wilcox and Rosalind McKeever, co-curators of Fashioning Masculinities: The Art of Menswear, said: "Masculine fashion is enjoying a period of unprecedented creativity. It has long been a powerful mechanism for encouraging conformity or expressing individuality. Rather than a linear or definitive history, this is a



*Jacob Huysmans, Frances Stewart, later Duchess of Richmond, 1664. Royal Collection*

*Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*

journey across time and gender. The exhibition brings together historical and contemporary looks with art that reveals how masculinity has been performed. This is a celebration of the masculine wardrobe, and everyone is invited to join in."

Fashioning Masculinities opens with a Craig Green SS2021 ensemble of a deconstructed suit, alluding to the construction and deconstruction of both the masculine body and conventions of masculinity, a theme that is central throughout the show. The three main galleries – *Undressed*, *Overdressed*, and *Redressed* – follow, culminating with the finale, *Dressed*.

The exhibition design is by JA Projects. *Undressed* explores the male body and underwear in a utopian dreamscape, whilst *Overdressed* takes visitors into the elite masculine wardrobe in a sumptuous, immersive space with courtly grandeur, featuring oversized silhouettes, abundant colour, and lavish materials. The third section, *Redressed*, explores the construction and dissolution of the suit, with the exhibition design conveying the idea of an urban reawakening.

*Undressed* explores the male body and underwear, looking at how classical European ideals of masculinity have been perpetuated and challenged





Wool coat and trousers, and silk top hat, United States, 1845–1853. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

over the centuries. Plaster casts of the Apollo Belvedere and the Farnese Hermes – which highlight a tradition of depicting idealised male bodies draped in textiles that reveal more than they conceal – are juxtaposed with modern and contemporary representations of the body, from prints and photography by David Hockney, Lionel Wendt, Zanele Muholi, Del LaGrace Volcano and Isaac Julien, to a Calvin Klein advertisement.

Also on display is a film of Matthew Bourne's *Spitfire* (1988) performed by New Adventures dancers, which takes place in the world of men's underwear advertising and mail order catalogue photography, whilst contemporary ensembles, by Ludovic de Saint Sernin, and Virgil Abloh for Off White, highlight how designers are appropriating sheer fabrics to create ensembles, alluding to a new honesty about menswear. Fashion's fascination with the body has seen it support changing masculine ideals, from evoking classical drapery with Giorgio Armani, to sculpting flesh, as seen in garments by Jean-Paul Gaultier and A-COLD-WALL, to celebrating body diversity.

This is exemplified in the exhibition by excerpts of *Arrested Movement*

by Anthony Patrick Manieri, an inclusive portrait series and awareness initiative celebrating and promoting positive body image. Undressed ends with Auguste Rodin's *Age of Bronze* sculpture, and *Tiresias*, a performance by Cassils, in which the artist melts a neoclassical torso carved in ice with their body heat.

The second gallery, *Overdressed*, explores the elite masculine wardrobe, epitomised by oversized silhouettes, lavish materials like silks and velvet in daring colours, and symbolic patterns to express status, wealth and individuality. Drawing synergies across the centuries, the section features armoured breastplates to silky smoking suits, sweeping capes to ribbons and lace, including Grinling Gibbons' wooden carving imitating a Venetian needlepoint lace cravat, displayed alongside real lace, and a Dolce & Gabbana cape juxtaposed with a Sofonisba Anguissola painting. The section also includes grooming, with makeup and shaving equipment.

Historically, menswear was full of pattern and colour. In the exhibition a rainbow of garments are displayed on a billiards table, from a 17th century red doublet and a yellow 1960s jacket from Carnaby Street, through to a bright blue Alessandro Michele for Gucci suit, worn by Harry Styles. A section on scarlet and pink highlights the return of this masculine colour to popularity.

Aristocratic sitters in oil paintings by Joshua Reynolds and Jean-Baptiste Perronneau are displayed alongside pink ensembles by Harris Reed and Grace Wales Bonner among others. Nearby, a custom Randi Rahm ensemble – a suit and full-length embroidered cloak with a hot pink lining –

worn by Billy Porter at the Golden Globes in 2019, complements the selection. Internationally traded textiles, imported silks and floral patterns, reflect their wearers relationship to the world.

Through the lens of contemporary fashion, from Alessandro Michele for Gucci and Kim Jones for Fendi to Rahemur Rahman, Ahluwalia and Orange Culture, *Overdressed* shows how historic ideas begin to shift, with a full rainbow of masculine outfits on display.

The third gallery, *Redressed*, pieces together the modern masculine uniform of the suit, from Beau Brummell to the contemporary runway. *Redressed* opens with a reflection on English country tailoring and the origins of the suit – with historic garments



Harris Reed *Fluid Romanticism 001*. Photographer Giovanni Corabi



Gucci Pre-Fall 2019 Men's Tailoring Campaign. Courtesy of Gucci

from the V&A collection shown alongside contemporary reimaginings, including a kilt by Nicholas Daley – before exploring how military attire influenced civilian dress. In the twentieth century an abundance of mass-produced suits bred creativity as Mods, Teddy Boys and all manner of subcultures looked to define their styles through tailoring, explored in the exhibition through garments and photography.

A section on leather shows how designers like Tom Ford for Gucci, Hedi Slimane for Dior and Donatella Versace took their interest in leather to a new place, whilst a series of frock coats from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day includes examples by Prada, Alexander McQueen and Raf Simons. *Redressed* also includes paintings as well as extensive photography showing changing styles and attitudes, from Oscar Wilde, Claude Cahun and Cecil Beaton to The Beatles and Sam Smith. Robert Longo's 1981 drawing from the series *Men in the Cities* introduc-

es the final part of the section about the dissolving of the suit.

A new wave of fashion designers from Rick Owens to JW Anderson to Comme des Garçons to Lesiba Mabitsela are slashing away at conventions, both for menswear, and masculinity. The exhibition culminates in a celebratory finale, showcasing three iconic gowns – a Christian Siriano tuxedo gown worn by Billy Porter, an Alessandro Michele for Gucci custom gown and tailored jacket worn by Harry Styles, and a wedding dress by Ella Lynch worn by Bimini Bon Boulash – alongside a specially commissioned, monumental film by Quentin Jones with Cadence Films.



Omar Victor Diop, *Jean-Baptiste Belley*, 2014. Courtesy M&A/NZ-A Gallery, Paris. © Omar Victor Diop



BOOKS

# BOOKS THAT TELL THE STORY OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

By YANA GREEN

If you are looking to fill in a gap in your history knowledge or are seeking to elevate your understanding of the events of the Great Patriotic War, look no further. These are some of the best books ever written about the Great Patriotic War – and rated highly by Amazon readers.

**Russia at War, 1941–1945: A History**  
By Alexander Werth

As a behind-the-scenes eyewitness to the pivotal, shattering events as

they occurred, Werth chronicles with vivid detail the hardships of everyday citizens, massive military operations, and the political movements toward diplomacy as the world tried to reckon with what they had created. Despite its sheer historical scope, Werth tells the story of a country at war in startlingly human terms, drawing from his daily interviews and conversations with generals, soldiers, peasants, and other working class civilians. The result is a unique and expansive work with immeasurable breadth and depth, built on lucid and engaging prose, that captures every aspect of a terrible moment in human history.

Now newly updated with a foreword by Soviet historian Nicolas Werth, the son of Alexander Werth, this new edition of *Russia at War* continues to be indispensable World War II journalism and the definitive historical authority on the Soviet-German war.

**Red Phoenix Rising: The Soviet Air Force in World War II**  
By Von Hardesty

A groundbreaking account of the Soviet Air Force in World War II, the original version of this book, *Red Phoenix*, was hailed by the *Washington Post* as



both “brilliant” and “monumental.” That version has now been completely overhauled in the wake of an avalanche of declassified Russian archival sources, combat documents, and statistical information made available in the past three decades. The result, *Red Phoenix Rising*, is nothing less than definitive.

The saga of the Soviet air force, one of the least chronicled aspects of the war, marked a transition from near annihilation in 1941 to the world’s largest operational-tactical air force four years later. Von Hardesty and Ilya Grinberg reveal the dynamic changes in tactics and operational art that allowed the VVS to bring about that remarkable transformation. Drawing upon a wider array of primary sources, well beyond the uncritical and ultra-patriotic Soviet memoirs underpinning the original

version, this volume corrects, updates, and amplifies its predecessor. In the process, it challenges many “official” accounts and revises misconceptions promoted by scholars who relied heavily on German sources, thus enlarging our understanding of the brutal campaigns fought on the Eastern Front.

The authors describe the air campaigns as they unfolded, with full chapters devoted to the monumental victories at Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk. By combining the deeply affecting human drama of pilots, relentlessly confronted by lethal threats in the air and on the ground, with a rich technical understanding of complex military machines, they have produced a fast-paced, riveting look at the air war on the Eastern Front as it has never been seen before. They also address dilemmas faced by the Soviet Air Force in the immediate postwar era as it moved to adopt the new technology of long-range bombers, jet propulsion and nuclear arms.

**Operation Bagration: The Soviet Destruction of German Army Group Center, 1944**  
By Ian Baxter

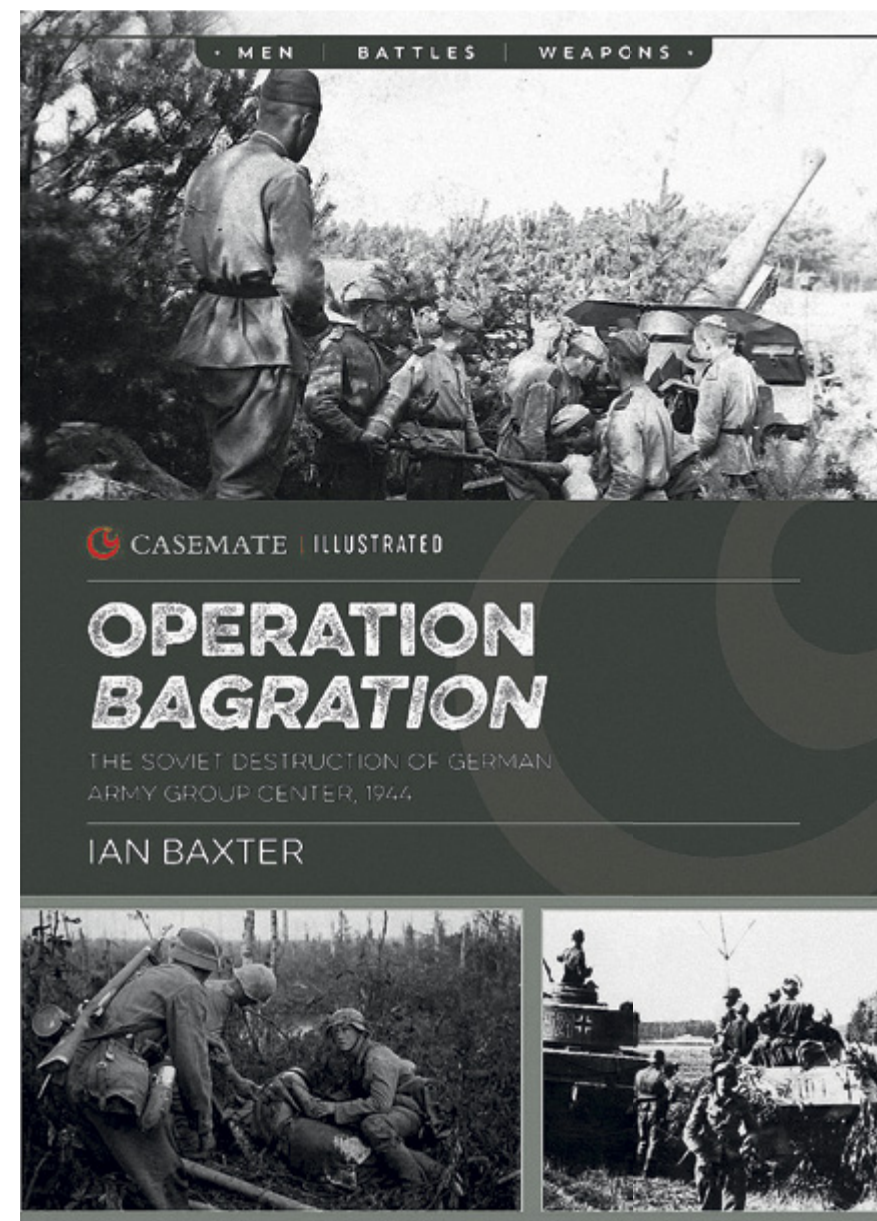
Bagration was the code word that the Soviet Army gave for their summer offensive in 1944. This massive offensive led to the destruction of the German Army Group Center and was the greatest military defeat ever experienced by the German Army during World War Two. This book provides an absorbing insight into the German defeat and the Russian offensive using a wide variety of rare and previously unpublished photographs. With detailed captions and text together with 20 artist profiles and maps, the book shows the compelling story of how German Army Group Center tried to counter the overwhelming might of the Soviet Army as it poured thousands of men, weapons and armour across the German lines, smashing its way through.

What ensued was a swift and bloody battle of attrition as the German Army tried to contain the might of its unstoppable enemy. In the days and weeks that followed German units fought and gradually retreated under the constant hammer blows of Russian ground and aerial bombardments, and endless armoured and infantry attacks. Many German units fighting to the grim death were duty-bound not to withdraw, and what followed was a disaster of a colossal magnitude. As the Soviet might punched a massive hole in the German lines it sent huge shock waves through Army Group

Center forcing them to retreat or face total annihilation.

However, the Russian offensive was so quick that many of the German units with their panzer and infantry divisions quickly became encircled and destroyed – its remnants retreating west in order to save itself. By the end of the battle this cataclysm was bigger than that experienced at Stalingrad. It saw the German Army being pushed out of Russia towards Poland with the loss of over 300,000 men and most of its weaponry lost.

The story of the destruction of Army Group Center during the

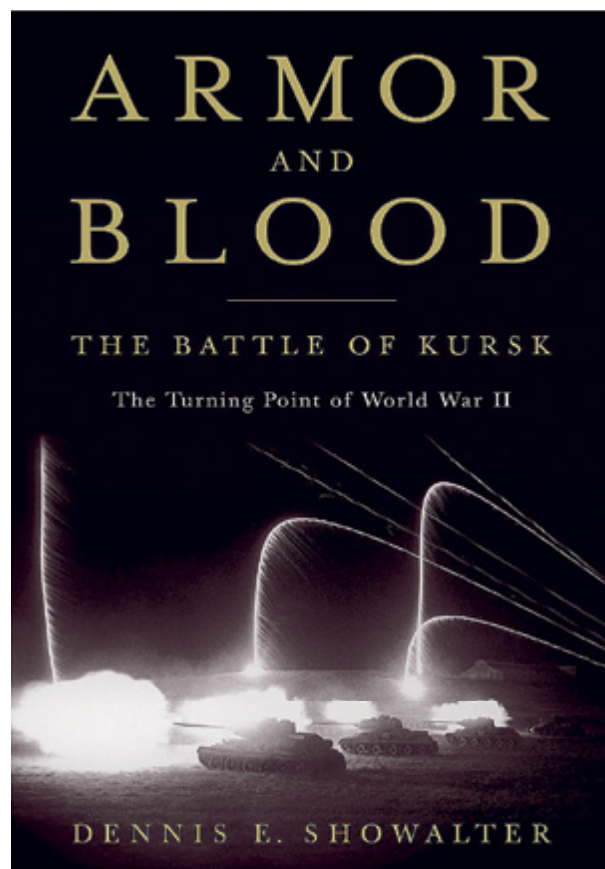




summer of 1944 has been completely overshadowed by the D-Day campaign in Normandy three weeks earlier. Yet, the battle in which the German forces endured on the Eastern Front that fateful summer was more catastrophic than that experienced by the Allies on the Western Front, but little is known of the operation. This book reveals the lesser-known battle in the East and shows how the German forces fought and lost against overwhelming odds.

**Armor and Blood:  
The Battle of  
Kursk: The Turning Point of  
World War II**  
*By Dennis Showalter*

While the Battle of Kursk has long captivated World War II aficionados, it has been unjustly overlooked by historians. Drawing on the masses of new information made available by the opening of the Russian military archives, Dennis Showalter at last corrects that error. This battle was the critical turning point on World War II's Eastern Front. In the aftermath of the Red Army's brutal repulse of the Germans at Stalingrad, the stakes could not have been higher. More than three million men and eight thousand tanks met in the heart of the Soviet Union, some four hundred miles south of Moscow, in an encounter that both sides knew would reshape the war. The adversaries were at the peak of their respective powers. On both sides, the generals and the dictators they served were in agreement on where,



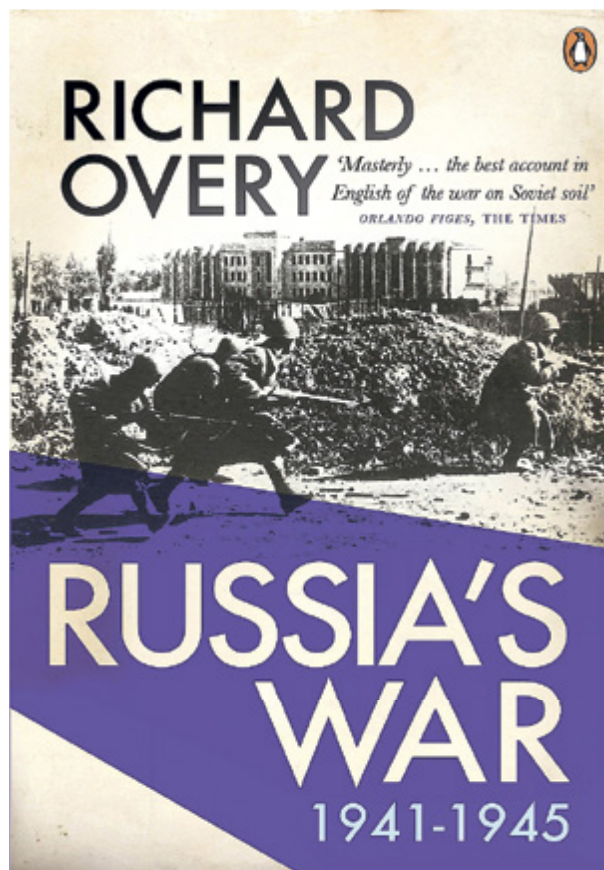
why, and how to fight. The result was a furious death grapple between two of history's most formidable fighting forces – a battle that might possibly have been the greatest of all time.

In "Armor and Blood", Showalter re-creates every aspect of this dramatic struggle. He offers expert perspective on strategy and tactics at the highest levels, from the halls of power in Moscow and Berlin to the battlefield command posts on both sides. But it is the author's exploration of the human dimension of armoured combat that truly distinguishes this book. In the classic tradition of John Keegan's *The Face of Battle*, Showalter's narrative crackles with insight into the unique dynamics of tank warfare – its effect on men's minds as well as their bodies. Scrupulously researched, exhaustively documented, and vividly illustrated, this book is a chilling testament to man's ability to build and to destroy.

When the dust settled, the field at Kursk was nothing more than a wasteland of steel carcasses, dead soldiers, and smoking debris. The Soviet victory ended German hopes of restoring their position on the Eastern Front, and put the Red Army on the road to Berlin. *Armor and Blood* presents readers with what will likely be the authoritative study of Kursk for decades to come.

**Russia's War:  
A History of  
the Soviet Effort:  
1941–1945**  
*By Richard Overy*

The Russian war effort to defeat invading Axis powers, an effort that assembled the largest mil-



itary force in recorded history and that cost the lives of more than 25 million Soviet soldiers and civilians, was the decisive factor for securing an Allied victory.

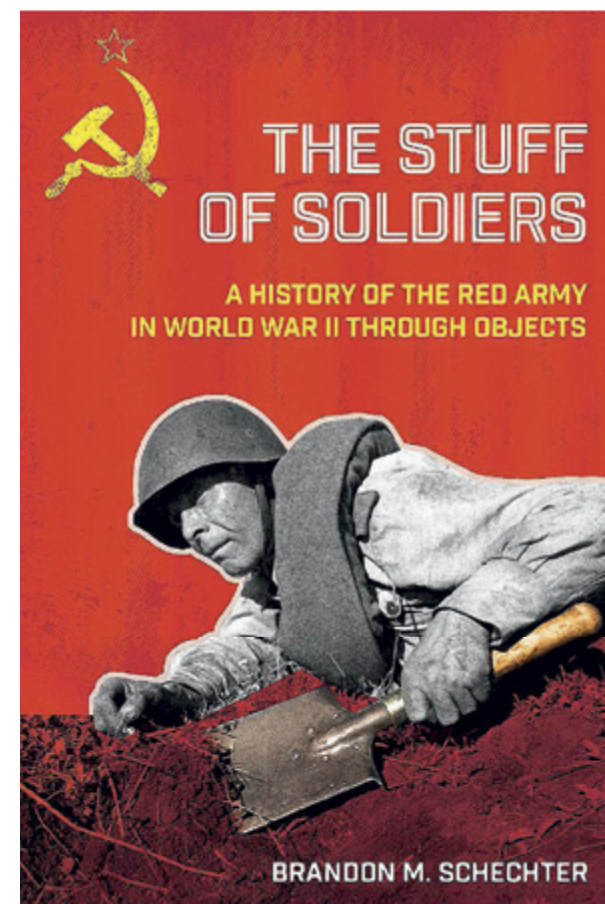
Now with access to the wealth of film archives and interview material from Russia used to produce the ten-hour television documentary "Russia's War", Richard Overy tackles the many persuasive questions surrounding this conflict. Was Stalin a military genius? Was the defense of Mother Russia a product of something greater than numbers of tanks and planes – of something deep within the Russian soul?

**The Stuff of Soldiers:  
A History of the Red Army  
in World War II through Objects**  
*By Brandon M. Schechter*

"The Stuff of Soldiers" uses everyday objects to tell the story of the Great Patriotic War as never before. Brandon Schechter attends to a diverse array of things – from spoons to tanks – to show how a wide array of citizens became soldiers, and how the provisioning of material goods separated soldiers from civilians.

Through a fascinating examination of leaflets, proclamations, newspapers, manuals, letters to and from the front, diaries, and interviews, *The Stuff of Soldiers* reveals how the use of everyday items made it possible to wage war. The dazzling range of documents showcases ethnic diversity, women's particular problems at the front, and vivid descriptions of violence and looting.

Each chapter features a series of related objects: weapons, uniforms, rations, and even the knick-knacks in a soldier's rucksack. These objects narrate the experience of people at war, illuminating the changes taking place in Soviet society over the course of the most destructive conflict in recorded history. Schechter argues that spoons, shovels, belts, and watches held as much meaning to the waging



of war as guns and tanks. In *The Stuff of Soldiers*, he describes the transformative potential of material things to create a modern culture, citizen, and soldier during World War II.

**The Unwomanly Face of War:  
An Oral History of Women in  
World War II**  
*By Svetlana Alexievich*

For more than three decades, Svetlana Alexievich has been the memory and conscience of the twentieth century. When the Swedish Academy awarded her the Nobel Prize, it cited her invention of "a new kind of literary genre," describing her work as "a history of emotions... a history of the soul."

In *The Unwomanly Face of War*, Alexievich chronicles the experiences of the Soviet women who fought on the front lines, on the home front, and in the occupied territories. These women – more than a million in to-

tal – were nurses and doctors, pilots, tank drivers, machine-gunners, and snipers. They battled alongside men, and yet, after the victory, their efforts and sacrifices were forgotten.

Alexievich traveled thousands of miles and visited more than a hundred towns to record these women's stories. Together, this symphony of voices reveals a different aspect of the war – the everyday details of life in combat left out of the official histories.

Translated by the renowned Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, *The Unwomanly Face of War* is a powerful



and poignant account of the central conflict of the twentieth century, a kaleidoscopic portrait of the human side of war.



FILMS

# FILMS ABOUT WORLD WAR II

By JAMES SWIFT

World War II has inspired numerous filmmakers and scriptwriters – with all its pain, drama and human tragedy, but also with hope and indefinite strength of human will. With so many classics to choose from, we narrowed it down to top five films about World War II that show the historical events of the time through various artistic interpretations.

## Life is Beautiful, 1997

Perhaps one of the most heart-breaking and yet somehow uplifting movies about the Second World War ever made, “Life is Beautiful” is an Italian comedy-drama starring Roberto Benigni, who also directed the film, as well as co-wrote it together with Vincenzo Cerami. In this movie, Guido Orefice, a Jewish

Italian bookshop owner, uses his imagination to protect his son from the terrible horrors of captivity in a Nazi concentration camp, explaining to him that the camp is a complicated game with series of tasks. Each task, he says, will earn both the father and son points and whoever gets to one thousand points first will win a much-coveted prize – a tank.

The movie has received high critical acclaim and was a commercial success.

## The Pianist, 2002

“The Pianist” is a biographical film produced and directed by Roman Polanski, starring Adrien Brody. The film is based on the autobiographical book by the Polish-Jewish pianist and composer Wladyslaw Szpilman and a Holocaust survivor, “The Pianist”. In September 1939, Szpilman is playing live on the radio in Warsaw when the station is bombed during the Nazi German invasion of Poland. Jews are soon prevented from working or owning businesses, and are also made to wear blue Star of David armbands.

As the war goes on, Szpilman meets an enemy officer, thinking that his days are numbered. By pure luck, the officer turns out to be a member



of Polish radio. He asks Szpilman to play. To find out the rest, make sure you watch this incredible film – it will fill you with deep sorrow and glimpses of joy – and everything in between.

## Atonement, 2007

“Atonement” is a romantic war drama film based on Ian McEwan’s 2001 novel of the same name. Directed by Joe Wright, “Atonement” features a truly stellar cast: James McAvoy, Keira Knightley, Saoirse Ronan, Romola Garai, Benedict Cumberbatch and Vanessa Redgrave.



The film follows a crime and its consequences over the course of six decades, beginning in the 1930s. The story unfolds in 1935 England, where 13-year-old Briony Tallis falls victim to a series of misunderstandings, while causing irreparable damage to the life of her older sister Cecilia and the housekeeper’s son Robbie Turner, on whom she has a crush. Robbie gets arrested and imprisoned, only to be released to serve in the army. He fights in the Battle of France. The story continues to reveal depths of sorrow that Briony’s actions have caused both her and her sister, as well as Robbie – while the all-devastating World War II takes over their lives.

## Inglourious Basterds, 2009

And for something completely different, there is always Quentin Tarantino. “Inglourious Basterds”, written and directed by Tarantino, stars Brad Pitt, Christoph Waltz, Michael Fassbender, Eli Roth, Diane Kruger, among others. This movie tells an alternate history story of two plots to assassinate Nazi Germany’s leadership. One of them is planned by Shosanna Dreyfus, a young French Jewish cinema proprietor, and the

other by a team of Jewish American soldiers led by First Lieutenant Aldo Raine, skilfully portrayed by Pitt. The film title was inspired by Italian director Enzo G. Castellari’s macaroni combat film The Inglorious Bastards (1978), though Tarantino’s film is not a remake of it.

## The Imitation Game, 2014

“The Imitation Game” may only have been released a few years ago (in 2014, to be exact), but it has taken a firm stance as one of the most important films made about World War II. This historical drama film is directed by Morten Tyldum and written by Graham Moore, and is based on the 1983 biography “Alan Turing: The Enigma” by Andrew Hodges. The title of the film quotes the name of the game Alan Turing proposed for answering the question “Can ma-



chines think?”, in his 1950 seminal paper “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”. The movie stars Benedict Cumberbatch who brilliantly portrays Alan Turing, British cryptanalyst, who decrypted German intelligence messages for the British government during the Second World War.





# UK LEADS THE WAY IN CLIMATE EDUCATION

By ELLA LARINA

The UK Department for Education has launched its Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy which includes the launch of a new natural History GCSE.

Secondary school students will be able to study the natural world through an exciting new GCSE in natural history to be introduced by September 2025.

It forms part of new plans announced by Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi, detailing how the UK education sector is to become a world leader in climate

change by 2030, as part of the launch of the government's flagship Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

The new Natural History qualification will enable young people to explore the world by learning about organisms and environments, environmental and sustainability issues, and gain a deeper knowledge of the natural world around them.

They will also develop the skills to help them carve a future career in the natural world if they wish to – for example observation, description, recording and analysis, through sustained and structured field study.

The government will also confirm its plans to accelerate the rollout of carbon literacy training to support at



least one sustainability lead in every locally maintained nursery, school, college and university. The training will support settings to develop climate action plans that will bring together and drive activity to improve climate education, put in place measures to protect them against the effects of climate change, and increase climate resilience through adaptation initiatives.

The Education Secretary will also pledge greater support for teaching climate change at all levels and by 2023 there will be new requirements for further education teachers to build sustainability into their teaching.

Young people will also be able to bolster their environmental educa-

tion gained in existing subjects, including changes to landscapes and urbanisation in geography, and habitats and ecosystems in science.

"We are delivering a better, safer, greener world for future generations and education is one of our key weapons in the fight against climate change. The entrepreneurial, can-do spirit of this country makes me confident that we will win this fight," said Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi.

The new natural history GCSE will offer young people a chance to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of this amazing planet, its environment and how we can come together to conserve it.



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